

I am writing to express my deep concern at the proposed new media ownership rules. There are already too few companies controlling media and under no circumstances should rules preventing further consolidation be relaxed. For our country to truly be ruled by citizens as it was intended we all need access to as many unique sources of information as possible in all forms of communication--radio, television, newspapers and the internet. The longstanding safeguards that some would remove or weaken are not antiquated, they are an absolutely necessary element of a successful democracy.

Commonly owned media does not provide, as the FCC suggests, "stronger incentives to provide diverse formats, programs, and content". Media operates as any business does, and specifically targets consumers who are most likely to be interested in their product. Clearly the advertisers who support most media want their ads to be targeted to the people with the most buying power, not the most diverse group of people. Women, minorities and low-income communities are often adversely affected. This is not a conspiracy theory, but a fact of capitalism's effects on media.

There are many very able and effective competitors in the market, but it is the role of government to protect everyone's right to free speech, not to help companies maximize profits. In other industries, controlling more than 35% of the market may be commendable. But the media industry, which already enjoys extremely high profit margins compared to many other sectors, must accept that there is a necessary limit to their success that allows democracy to flourish.

Of course the rules don't permit maximum profits--they weren't meant to. They weren't meant to prevent business from succeeding, either, and they aren't. They exist to allow Americans do their most important job--be citizens.

Thank you for remembering to consider us all citizens first, and consumers second.